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ABSTRACT

Designed for governing boards, search committee members, and aspiring community college presidents, this booklet examines different institutional procedures involved in the search for and selection of a community college president, and outlines relevant problems and issues that should be considered at various phases of the process. After introductory material highlights the time and money involved in the search process, two models for the in-house presidential search are reviewed. Based upon these models, a basic framework for presidential searches is presented consisting of the pre-planning phase; the appointment of an acting or interim president; the creation of a presidential search committee; board review and update of institutional objectives; determination of the president's role, job description, and qualifications; solicitation of nominations and applications; screening, assessing, and narrowing the pool of applicants; selection of a new president; and making the offer and conducting negotiations. Next, the advantages and disadvantages of using outside consultants are presented, and advice is offered on the type and number of consultants and their level of involvement. Specific problems or issues related to multi-campus districts, affirmative action, and fiscal constraints are then considered. After a discussion of the procedures to be used in the case of unanticipated resignations, conclusions are presented on optimum search and selection methods. (HB)

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In Search Of A Community College President

Patricia A. Libby

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IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT

By

Patricia A. Libby

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IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Table of Contents

	Page
Preface	iii
Introduction	1
Presidential Search in Educational Institutions	2
In-House Search	2
Using Outside Consultants	17
Special Problems and Issues	21
Interim or Acting Presidents in Educational Institutions	24
In-House Appointment	25
Using Outside Consultants	28
Special Problems and Issues	30
Heretical Concepts and Conclusions for Presidential Search	31
Bibliography	33
Figures 1--A Flowchart of the Search Process	3
2--In-House Search: Phases Toward an Effective Presidential Selection	5
3--Communication Network: Key Questions at Each Phase	7
4--Decision Matrix for Use of Consultants	19

PREFACE

"In Search of a Community College President," authored by Pat Libby, is an excellent analysis of one of the major concerns facing boards of trustees.

Throughout the monograph are references to other authors who have written on this most important topic. These references and Mrs. Libby's analyses, conclusions, and recommendations provide the reader with a wealth of relevant information about the problems to be faced, to be undertaken, and to be solved in the search process.

As a person who has participated in many presidential searches, I am enthusiastic about Mrs. Libby's monograph and recommend it strongly to community college boards of trustees as required reading prior to the initiation of the search for a college president. A thorough understanding of the complexities and potential destructive forces inherent in the search process should help prevent actions by a search committee and by the board which may be disruptive to the college and to the educational program.

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IN SEARCH OF A COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT

There is general consensus that one of the most important and critical responsibilities of trustees of a college or district governing board is the search for and selection of the institution's chief executive officer. The term of office for trustees is such that it is very likely that each trustee will be involved in at least one presidential search and appointment (Dick, 1977).

A decade ago the search procedures for selection of a new college president tended to be informal, of an ad hoc nature, and reflected the need of the institution to minimize the conflict caused by presidential succession. A search conducted according to this principle may have resulted in decreasing tendencies toward innovation and change (Birnbaum, 1971). As colleges face increasing demands from constituencies for changes in programs and services and increasing financial stringency, it becomes necessary to select a president who can provide effective leadership. Toward this end presidential search procedures have evolved into a more formal, structured nature, yet still seem less well-developed than in other organizations. Kauffman (1980) notes that the process "...has been drastically altered from one of imperious trustee choice to one that many consider of excessive participation by everybody" (p. 17), thereby becoming a source of considerable conflict.

Searching for the chief executive officer is a process that can be quite costly in time and money. The costs become significant when one considers the following data:

> *The presidency has an expected turnover rate of one per every four and one-half years.
> *Some 300 searches will be conducted annually during the next few years.
> *Each selection will attract a minimum of 50 candidates. (AACJC, 1979, p. 24)

Costs may be held to a minimum if the search is performed efficiently. Some concerned individuals have outlined methods for searching for the top executive which they believe are effective. It would appear to be prudent for trustees of community colleges/multicampus districts to review, adapt, and establish improved guidelines for selection of a president to better fulfill their chief responsibility.

This paper will examine different institutional search procedures which have been proposed, along with relevant problems and issues that should be considered at various phases of the process. The process and issues surrounding appointment of an acting or interim president, a crucial step in many searches, will be reviewed. In the conclusion, the direction of future community college searches and key heretical concepts will be discussed.

There is substantial literature available on search procedures in higher education and other organizations, on the changing role and nature of the community college presidency, and on problems facing higher education. This paper will serve governing boards, search committee members, and aspiring community college presidents as a synthesized reference of current processes and issues.

The ad hoc selection process of a decade ago has been slow to change. Demerath, Stephens, and Taylor noted that "(m)ost observers of the search and selection process agree that it is a hit-or-miss affair...there is no orderly mechanism guaranteeing that all qualified candidates for the job will be considered, that the best of those considered will be chosen.... Most writers agree that the board usually bases its selection on rather inadequate information, and sometimes without clear notions of the type of (person) it wants, or of the direction it wants the university to take" (1967, p. 48, 49). Noting the unchanged nature of this process, Watkins wrote over a decade later "(t)he average college presidential search committee is composed of 10 people who have never selected a president before and who usually go about the task in a haphazard manner" (1978, p. 6). However, as fiscal stringency forces a shift of authority and accountability to the position of the president at many educational institutions, there has been some movement to improve the search process to find the person who will best provide effective institutional leadership.

Realizing that the need for improvement in the presidential search process exists, a number of community colleges have begun to establish policies to be able to respond quickly and to communicate thoroughly their search procedures and plans for interim administration. Some of the policies outline in-house presidential search procedures which at times include the guidance of an outside consultant. An even larger step was the establishment in 1980 of a chief executive search service by the Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) that functions much like the executive search firms in the business world. An increasing number of community college boards may opt to use an outside service to meet their needs. Structuring the search process and establishing sound policies should lead to more efficient and effective selection of the best individual for the presidential position.

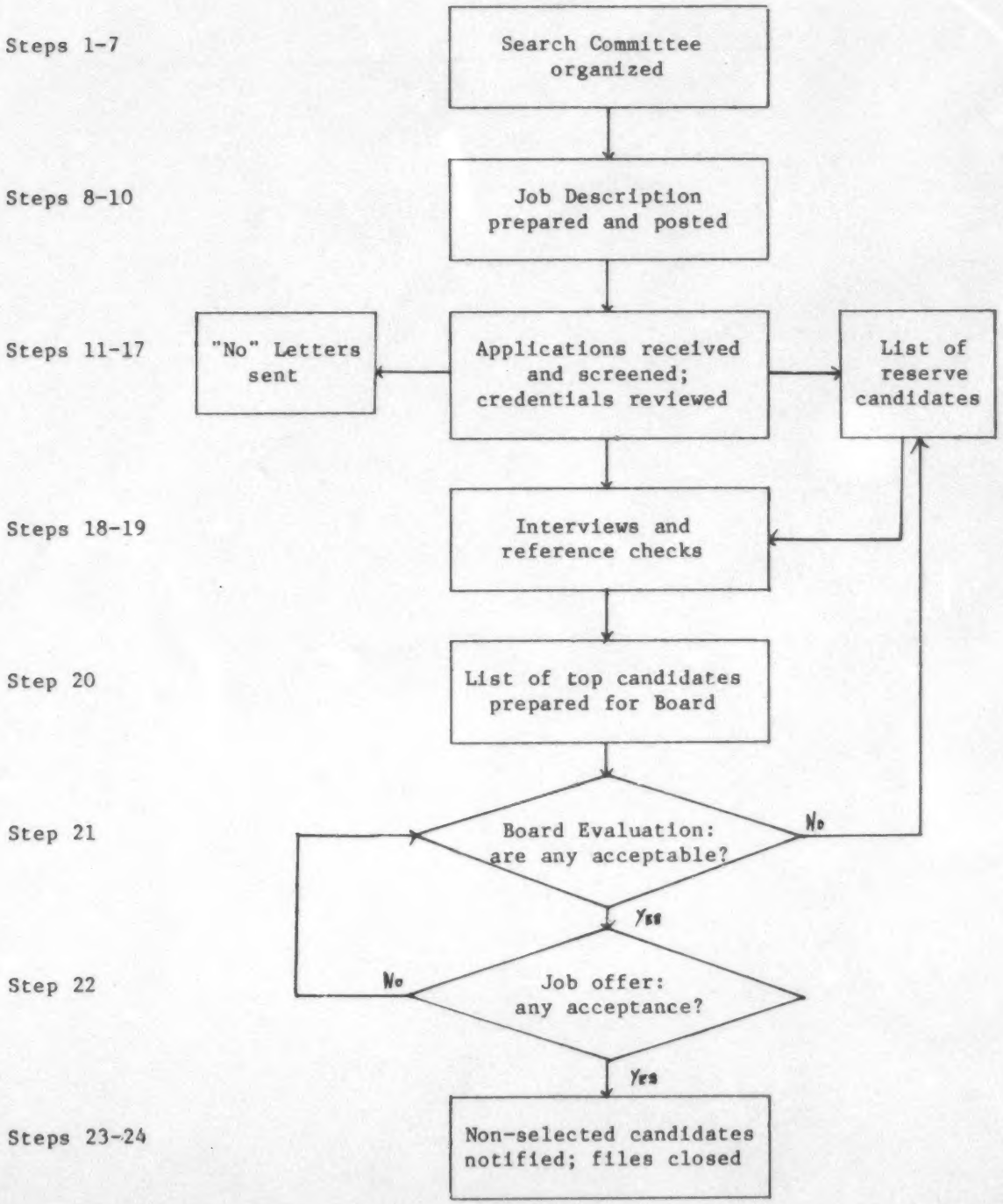
In-House Search

Due to the tremendous diversity of community colleges, both in size and nature, few individual college search procedures will be the same. However, a basic framework could be established and adapted as necessary to meet the needs of each institution. A number of critics have suggested a basic approach for an in-house search process.

Kaplowitz (1973) developed a flowchart containing twenty-four steps in a search. Figure 1 is an abbreviated adaptation of the flowchart which highlights the key phases and suggests a format for organizing a search. Within each step, there is much detail that will have to be added as decided by the board or search committee. For example, Kaplowitz's step 10 is "Position is posted." The committee will have to decide how, where, and when to post the opening, what to say, what the deadlines will be, and how the effort will be coordinated to maintain the necessary controls.

The flowchart is a useful tool to emphasize the point that the search process will break down if a step or phase is eliminated or performed without careful consideration. The end result then cannot be reached as effectively

Figure 1. A Flowchart of the Search Process (adapted from Kaplowitz, 1973)



or efficiently, if at all. There are also other ways of representing graphically the search process.

Kauffman (1974) advanced a descriptive report of the search process directed primarily to four-year colleges and univerities, but indicated that community and junior colleges would find a number of parts useful. Figure 2 converts Kauffman's description into key phases described as building blocks. As contrasted with the flowchart, this technique emphasizes, not only the necessity of following the steps or phases in logical order, but also highlights the need to have prior steps provide a base or guidance for carrying on the additional phases of the search process. In other words, later steps provide results to the extent that earlier steps were performed properly. As an example, the attitude or climate of the search established at the beginning will have a significant impact on attracting the best candidates. The qualifications determined as minimum requirements for filling the vacancy, if not carefully defined to maximize exposure to the best candidates, could lead to a narrowing of the candidate pool too early in the process and may result in the search committee having to rethink the necessary qualifications, an inefficient and frustrating dilemma.

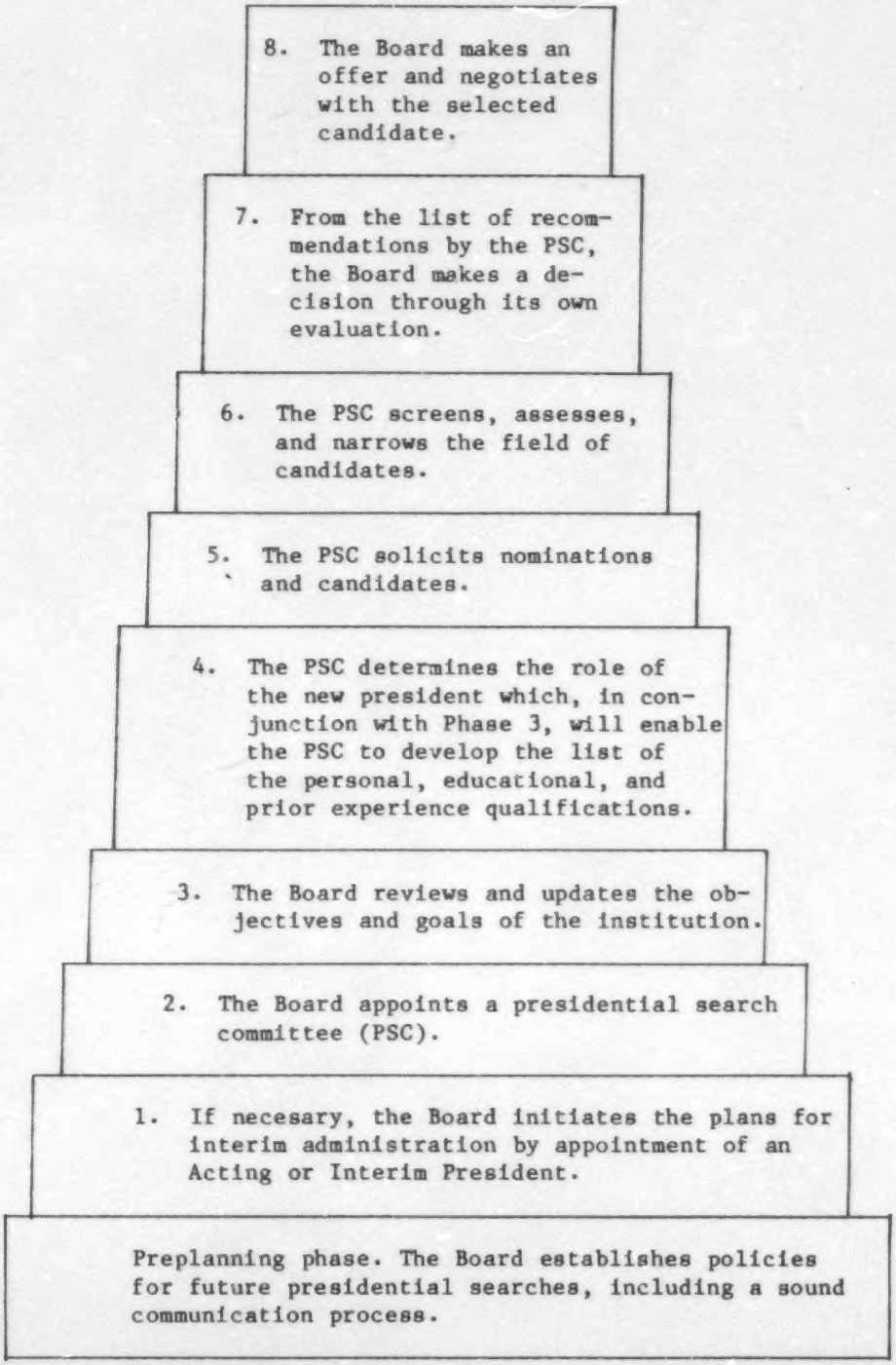
Both approaches in Figures 1 and 2 present similar phases which serve as a basic framework for the search process. This section will discuss the Kauffman (1974) adapted phases given the added dimension of the building concept. There is one additional, yet essential, phase to be discussed that can enhance the probability for a successful search--the preplanning phase.

Preplanning phase. Many colleges without a president, whether sudden in onset or not, may face considerable conflict over the interim arrangements and selection procedures to be followed. Without established policies for management of the situation, this conflict may cause considerable ill will, anxiety, and dysfunctional pressures (Kauffman, 1974). Moore described the reactions of certain constituencies at the University of Vermont to a presidential resignation.

> In January, 1975, the president of the University of Vermont resigned to take a new post. Faculty and staff immediately began to react as if a "leadership succession crisis" had set in.
>
> Uncertainty and insecurity became the order of the day. Rumor mills churned rapidly, and the important work of the University slowed almost to a standstill. (p. 10)

It is for this reason that many individuals have stressed the importance for governing boards to establish clear policies which indicate their authority and the process to be undertaken. The process should be determined well in advance of the need for selection procedures as a form of "anticipatory recruitment" (Kauffman, 1974). By delineating the institution's search process in advance, the governing board should be able to relieve or circumvent any tensions created by unexpected or expected presidential succession and quickly undertake the necessary steps to fill the vacancy.

Figure 2. In-House Search: Phases Toward an Effective Presidential Selection (adapted from Kauffman, 1974)


8. The Board makes an offer and negotiates with the selected candidate.
7. From the list of recommendations by the PSC, the Board makes a decision through its own evaluation.
6. The PSC screens, assesses, and narrows the field of candidates.
5. The PSC solicits nominations and candidates.
4. The PSC determines the role of the new president which, in conjunction with Phase 3, will enable the PSC to develop the list of the personal, educational, and prior experience qualifications.
3. The Board reviews and updates the objectives and goals of the institution.
2. The Board appoints a presidential search committee (PSC).
1. If necesary, the Board initiates the plans for interim administration by appointment of an Acting or Interim President.
Preplanning phase. The Board establishes policies for future presidential searches, including a sound communication process.

An essential part of the preplanning phase is establishing a clearly-defined communication process to be overlayed onto the formal process. From the first awareness of the need for a presidential search until the selected individual is in position, effective and timely communication to the interested parties (while maintaining appropriate confidentiality as discussed below) can improve and expedite the search process. Also, since many states have enacted laws to make the selection a public affair, it would seem appropriate for affected community colleges to place particular attention on establishing a strong communication system as an integral part of the search process.

The communication questions that must be addressed at each step of the search are listed in Figure 3. These questions are relevant at any level of communication for any type of information. Communication is important within the search committee, between the search committee and the board, and among these groups and external parties including the faculty, the community, and the news media. The necessity for planning the communication network can be shown, for example, by applying Figure 3 to a part of Phase 6--the assessment of candidates. One common approach for reference checks is to have one or two members telephone references to ask similar questions for candidate comparisons. Before communicating the information gathered, the members checking references should answer all of the questions in Figure 3. For example, they might decide the following answers (keyed to Figure 3):

1. Is the information confidential? The information is confidential except to the search committee, and perhaps the board.

2. Why? The nature of the information is such that it would not have been given without an implicit or explicit assumption of confidentiality.

3. By whom? The committee members have a responsibility to maintain strictest confidentiality. However the one or two members who gathered the data must communicate the information to the other members.

4. To whom? Search committee members need to know the results of reference checks to make rational and informed decisions on the candidates. The board may also need such information at a later point in the search.

5. What? The source of reference checks, the responses, and any other application materials should be kept confidential by the committee members. However, those contacting references will have to share the information.

6. Where? Confidential information should be stored in a secure place, perhaps a locked file cabinet, as determined earlier in the search process.

7. When? All confidential material should remain so and be disposed of at the end of the search as predetermined. The search committee should have scheduled meetings on a timely basis to discuss the information obtained during the reference checks.

8. How? The one or two members will want to communicate all relevant information to the other committee members in a clear, well-organized manner. A standardized record sheet that was used to ask similar questions during the telephone conversations may provide an efficient method for future communication.

Figure 3. Communication Network: Key Questions
At Each Phase

1. Is the information confidential or should it be communicated?
2. Why is it so?
3. By whom should it be kept confidential or communicated?
4. To whom should it be communicated?
5. What should be kept confidential or communicated?
6. Where should it be kept confidential or communicated?
7. When should it be kept confidential or communicated?
8. How should it be kept confidential or communicated?

Appointment of an Acting or Interim President. When a sudden vacancy in the presidency occurs, governing boards should be prepared to initiate plans for interim administration. The use of acting or interim presidents is a growing trend. To highlight its importance, this phase of the search process will be discussed in a separate section of the paper.

The Appointment of a Presidential Search Committee. Once a current or planned vacancy is determined and administrative continuity is assured in the interim the governing board of the college should appoint a presidential search committee (PSC). Herein lies one of the most controversial and emotional issues in presidential search--the scope of membership. A shift from strictly trustee determination to a process that involves considerable participation by various interested parties was noted above. This change may create conflict among the committee members and between the committee and the board. Reinert (1974) discusses his perception of the weaknesses of the PSC:

> In my opinion, the typical search committee ends up becoming more involved in placating the various interest groups on campus than in serving the best interests of the institution as a whole. Too many people get into the act, both directly and indirectly.... (O)nce you try to involve a lot of people in the search process, there is no end to it. Either you wind up with one huge committee or an impossible collection of small committees--and either way the result is a managerial headache of major proportions. (pp. 10-11)

There is little question however that the PSC should represent broadly all of the major constituencies with which the new president will interact. The president is seen by all as a link among the college's constituencies. The concept of "shared governance" in a political or collegial model of the institution enforces the need for cooperation and support by each constituency for administrative success (Kauffman, 1978). Nason (1980) notes that "...the principle that government should rest on the consent of the governed is today so widely held in the academic world that participation by faculty and increasingly by students and alumni in the selection of a new president is considered necessary for the legitimation of his or her authority" (p. 10). To gain cooperation and reduce or eliminate possible resentment, there should be a provision in the search policies for the participation of alumni, faculty, staff, students, community representatives, and other constituencies. These groups can generate many useful ideas and heighten the awareness of the concerns of all participants. Almost all colleges allow for faculty and administrative representation and, to a lesser degree, student participation.

Certain problems and weaknesses can be overcome by establishing guidelines in advance. The governing board will determine the process for constituency participation in selecting a president (Kauffman, 1980), including the difficult determination of the nature, the structure, and the rationale for representation on the search committee. Most critics recommend that the PSC serves in an advisory capacity to the trustees with the governing board making the final selection, which is the typical pattern today. Regarding structure, the average community college PSC is composed of 10 people (Watkins, 1978). By its very nature, a community college PSC should include faculty, administrative staff, board members, students, alumni, and representatives from the community,

including women and minorities. The governing board should outline the rationale for appointment by deciding how many and from where the participants will be selected. For instance, faculty representatives may be selected from Faculty Council; students may be chosen from student government; alumni may come from the board of the Alumni Association. Some critics advise that some governing board members should serve on the PSC during the search/screen process as well as participate in the selection/appointment process to provide for maximum communication between the groups.

Kronovet and Hawley (1977) caution that a problem may occur if the breadth of representation becomes a major concern, even over the concern for the end result of the process--a decision on the most highly qualified individual for the presidency. This dysfunctional emphasis is a form of means/ends disjuncture whereby the means to an end are separated out of the process as ends in themselves. The goal of the search process is diminished in importance and consideration at various phases.

> ...(B)oards may by-pass the most significant consideration of all: A determination of the nature of the expertise which it is vital for members to bring to such a committee. A high level of expertise is essential if, for example, they are to pursue an astute line of questioning and probe any superficial response in order to promote a meaningful exchange of ideas. (p. 3)

The size of the committee should depend on the expertise that is needed to measure competency, with a smaller and less formal committee necessary to control confidentiality. Consideration of the issues of expertise and representation are critical to an effective PSC.

Once formed, the PSC should immediately select a chairperson (if one is not appointed), establish a timetable, and ensure that the board will provide adequate staff and financial assistance. To reduce ambiguity and save time, the board's charge to the PSC should include guidelines on the breadth of the search, confidentiality, and the use of outside consultants (Nason, 1980). On the average the PSC in community colleges will take from 3 to 12 months in the search for a president. A separate office should be available for securing all confidential records as well as a support staff for administrative duties and communication. Watkins (1978) noted that the average budget for search and selection ranged from $3,000 to $8,000. The budget is used for telephone, postage, printing, security, and travel charges. As a result of inflation, the cost today could be considerably higher. A survey by Nason (1980) disclosed the range to be from $0 to $50,000 for community colleges with a median cost of $3,000 to $4,000. Williams (1976) emphasized, however, that few search committees are given an adequate budget.

Board Review and Update of Institutional Objectives. The next step in the presidential search process is a careful analysis of the college's objectives and goals which serve as a basis for developing criteria for the selection of a president. Many colleges have defined the qualifications for the presidency without explicit consideration of the needs of the institution and its future direction. The challenge is to match specific talents, skills, experiences, and commitments to the needs of the institution.

A change in the chief executive is in most cases "a profoundly disturbing event" that can complicate the selection process, but that affords the board of trustees the opportunity to reappraise the values and direction of the institution (Nason, 1979). If planned carefully and with sufficient time, the result could be a favorable climate of understanding and cooperation among the constituencies that will only enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the search. This is a difficult task, but the review, appraisal, and update process is critical for success of the search, new president, and institution.

Nason (1980) notes that a continuing responsibility of the governing board is the development of long-range plans (3 to 10 years) and their update from annual analytical reviews of institutional problems and needs, "...and those boards which have conscientiously fulfilled this obligation are in a highly advantageous position" (p. 14). However, such boards are the exception, rather than the rule. When searching for a president, community college/district boards will not have time for an elaborate self-study, yet "(o)ne needs to know something about the present condition of the college..., about the problems which are looming on the academic horizon if not already present, about the direction in which the institution must go to maintain its position or enhance its reputation, to improve its services or even merely to stay alive" (Nason, 1980, p. 29).

Nason (1980) outlines areas and issues common to community colleges (as well as other types of institutions) as a guide for boards in a presidential search.

1. Changes in objectives. Is a change in direction (goals and purposes) wanted or needed as the community college analyzes changes in the social-political-economic character of its environment? What is happening in the community?

2. Fiscal management. What is the financial strength of the institution, currently and for the future, in an era of limited or declining resources? Is there strong financial management?

3. Educational expansion or consolidation. What are the pressures from a changing environment stressing expansion or consolidation of programs, courses, departments, or colleges?

4. Enrollment. What are the college's enrollment prospects given projections of demographic changes? What are the current and future sources of students? Should there be a change in recruitment efforts?

5. Educational quality. What is the present level of educational quality and what level does the institution want to maintain? What are the primary attributes of the quality that can be changed to attain the desired level?

6. Physical plant. How adequate are the facilities--library, classrooms, dormitories, laboratories, and athletic and social centers? What alterantives are available to meet the needs of the institution in the future?

7. Collective bargaining. What will be the new president's attitude toward collective bargaining of faculty, staff, and administration?

8. Student life and activities. How adequate are extracurricular programs such as counseling, sports, or social events?

9. Governance. How well does the present structure operate? Should there be a reorganization?

10. Community support. Does the college have the whole-hearted support of community sponsors? Does the community's or college's image need refurbishing?

11. Politics. What are the relationships with the state, county, and city governments? How can political interference be kept to a minimum?

Careful consideration of the current and future conditions of the institution is a very important phase to provide suggestions as to the kind of president needed.

Determination of the Presidential Role, Job Description, and Requisites. The PSC should fully understand the updated objectives and goals as communicated by the governing board. The personal, educational, and prior experience qualifications, both minimum and desirable, which will best fit the needs of the institution, should be determined in accordance with the role of the new president as established by the board. Although it is possible to have an adequate job description and qualifications already established, most presidential descriptions tend to be archaic or do not exist at all.

Marsee (1979) wrote a job description for the chief administrative officer of a community college in California. The role of the president involves administrative relationships, powers and authority:

> (T)he executive officer...will enforce all rules and regulations adopted by the Board. He shall be subject only to the Board of Trustees.... He will represent the Board in all matters...
>
> Powers and Authority--
>
> In the following areas, the Superintendent-President, serving the Board of Trustees, will:
>
> --Be its professional advisor...
> --Keep it informed about the College's programs and higher education in general...
> --Interpret the needs of the College/District...
> --Present his(her) personal recommendations on all problems and issues considered by it...
> --Participate in community activities...
> --Be responsible for all rules and regulations governing the admission, transfer, classfication, and graduation of students. (As adapted from pp. 5-7)

For the search committee to develop appropriate qualifications for the search, the board should have a clear notion of the intended role, powers, and authority to be vested in the new president. To establish a sound job description, the board may want to consider questions, such as:

> What will be the true relationship between the trustees and the president?
> What responsibilities will the president have?
> How much authority will the president have in matters concerning financial operations; budgets; purchases, sales, repairs, or alterations of real or personal school properties; educational program changes and operations; and students?

The PSC should incorporate the job description with the updated objectives and goals to derive job requisites to guide the search. The personal, educational, and prior experience qualifications should be communicated to the candidates as is done usually in position opening announcements. As well, the role of the new president should be communicated. Unfortunately, all too often there is insufficient communication of the expected administrative relationships, powers, and authority--the board to the PSC and the candidates with both groups--which often leads to the selection of the wrong candidate. The search at Hutchinson Community College is an example of a positive attempt to communicate the presidential role as early as possible.

Hutchinson Community College (Kansas), in its search for a new president, briefly outlined administrative functions of the president. These functions included the following: Be the chief representative of the College at the community, state, and national levels; be the educational leader responsible for the total educational environment of the College, including student services, continuing education/community services, and community relations.

A list of personal qualifications can be used as criteria for a more objective assessment of each candidate. However development of such a list can be difficult and not useful if the "ideal" person is being sought. The qualifications should be realistic, with some listed as required and others as desirable assets. Metropolitan Technical Community College's (NE, 1979) Board of Governors outlined the general qualifications it considered important for the new president: For professional education--an earned doctorate degree with a part of education devoted to educational administration, preferably vocational education; at least five years of administrative experience with some classroom and community college experience (to make sure the president understood the community college concept); demonstrated capabilities of strong management; and a proven record of excellent employee relations and community involvement.

Implicit in the above general qualifications are two specific needs of the institution that are becoming more important: managerial talent and skills for dealing with minority concerns. There has been a trend in recent years toward chief executive officers with strong business skills in managing, planning, and controlling the college in times of fiscal stringency. Manilla (1979) feels that the prototype chief executive in education is a machine-tooled decision maker skilled in computer technology and quantitative research. Regarding relations with minority concerns, Kirkpatrick (1978) developed a

profile of necessary personality traits and communication skills. Some of those traits include empathy for the problems of minorities, foresight to predict problems, and openness to minority participation in the decision-making process. The basic approach that the president would have to apply according to Kirkpatrick is Rogerian, that is, having unconditional positive regard for others. This approach would be desirable, but few individuals possess this ability in strong measure.

Solicitation of Nominations and Applications. The fifth step in the in-house presidential search requires solicitation for nominations and candidates from both inside and outside the institution, assuming a broad search is to be conducted. The PSC should seek prospects from a wide variety of sources. Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity requirements indicate that the institution should be able to provide evidence that it attempted to solicit all appropriately qualified candidates. To demonstrate the openness of the search, many colleges use advertisements indicating "An Equal Opportunity Employer," frequently in the New York Times, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and/or the Wall Street Journal. Watkins (1978) states that "(c)ommunity colleges are the most successful in finding candidates through advertisements..." (p. 6).

Other sources of candidates include internal job-opening postings for applications and nominations, news releases to educational associations (such as, the American Association of Colleges, American Council on Education, National Association of College and University Business Officers, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and ACCT), and announcements to various minority organizations (such as, women's caucuses and the American Association of University Women). Brochures to be sent to organizations usually are printed to explain why there is an opening, when and where to apply, the general qualifications expected, and information about the community college.

Confidentiality is very important throughout the search process. This is particularly true in making direct contact with presidents of other colleges considered as desirable candidates by the PSC and with individuals with whom the search committee members have developed relationships as important sources for recommendations. Encouragement of other college presidents and nominees must be underscored by the expression and maintenance of strictest confidentiality so as not to risk their withdrawal from consideration. Often these individuals are not actively seeking change and are content in their present and successful positions. They want to avoid problems that could occur if their names were associated with a search too early. It is recommended that initial announcements and communications should make clear that all that is needed is an expression of interest by sending a resume, but that no letters of reference are required at the early stages. Later, they can decide if they wish to proceed.

In most cases, independent colleges find maintenance of confidentiality easier than public institutions which must follow state law. In Florida, for example, the press is permitted to know the names of the candidates and be present for interviews and voting.

Screening, Assessing, and Narrowing the Pool of Candidates. Once the applications begin to arrive, the PSC should narrow the field. The committee should perform an initial screening to eliminate individuals who obviously are

not qualified based on agreed-upon criteria. The PSC members can divide up this task in any number of ways that seem appropriate (see Nason, 1980, for a discussion). From this stage on, it is recommended that there be careful documentation of rejections and communication with candidates as the search progresses. Letters of reference should be sent directly to the PSC. To provide a focus for the referees, the PSC can describe the nature of the institution and inform them of the criteria which have been established for the position. References should be checked and telephone calls made as necessary, again to reduce the number of candidates down to a reasonable number of highly qualified individuals for interviewing (perhaps 10 to 15). At this point, nominees should decide on their willingness to continue to be considered since maintaining strict confidentiality at this point becomes virtually impossible.

The interviews should be planned carefully so as to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the candidate under different conditions. If performed appropriately, the interviews can be an indispensible probe in examining the personal traits, organization and leadership skills, and other desirable and undesirable characteristics of each candidate. The intent is to identify the top three to five candidates for consideration by the trustees.

Hengst (1978) suggests two levels of interviews: One by the PSC in the PSC offices; a second applicable to the next phase to be performed by the governing board and/or PSC as an interview at the home location of the nominee. The interview process provides for a two-way exchange of information--interviewers gain insight into the candidate; the candidate learns about the institution, position, and trustee expectations. Development of a standardized record sheet with room for evaluative comments can facilitate both phases of interviews and improve comparisons for rank ordering the finalists by the trustees. It has been suggested that trustees and committee members utilize the record sheet as a guide for relevant questioning, be briefed on each candidate as thoroughly as possible prior to the interview, and meet the candidate's family, as well as be prepared to answer questions about the institution, duties, powers, and authority.

Hengst (1978) continues by listing various general questions aimed at identifying strengths and weaknesses. For example, asking about the candidate's most trying experience over the past year highlights personal characteristics. Questions can be asked regarding organization skills and philosophies such as "What is the function of the institution, the community college?" Additionally, leadership and management skills can be identified from questions on how presidents can provide for coordination of efforts of all members of the institution.

One approach is to arrange a "marathon" interview which is essentially open to all constituents for participation. Since the interviews are not confidential, the candidates should be forewarned. By their structure, they are usually lengthy with aggressive questioning. Although previous candidates have indicated the strenuous nature and high tension level of this form of interviewing, with some individuals expressing offense, many critics contend that the "marathon" interview offers a realistic approximation of the role of the new president.

One interesting observation of the screening and assessment process is

that various studies indicate that about 30% of new presidential appointments are of individuals from within the institution (Nason, 1979). Unlike business executive succession where in-house training of successors is predominant, educational institutions show a preference for "outsiders." One simple explanation could be that institutions do not provide for similar in-house training. Alternatively, given the more political nature of educational institutions, it may be that insiders are disadvantaged in the search since their strengths and weaknesses in their present positions have been observed and general impressions formed by some members of the board and search committee.

Interviews are but one form of evaluative tool available to the PSC. Hengst (1978) indicates that "...despite the importance of credentials, transcripts and recommendations, the key determinant is the interview" (p. 28). Interviews are essential. However some candidates are able to appear brilliant and charming during the interview which could be misleading. Unless the interrogator possesses special skills for interviewing, many which are noted above, it is possible that the best candidates to fill the vacancy may not be on the list to the trustees for their final selection. An additional critical evaluative tool that should complement the interview is the reference check.

Letters of reference from individuals selected by the candidates serve little purpose. Even letters solicited by the PSC can be less than candid for a few reasons. First, there is the potential for breach of confidence by the PSC members who read the letters. Additionally various federal and state laws allow greater access to previously confidential files. Finally, the increasing frequency in litigation in academic institutions allows further access to such files.

One of the more useful reference check methods is the telephone conversation for verifying the accuracy of written references. In fact, it may be better to make phone inquiries prior to solicitation of written references, since certain problems may surface in the conversation that may require follow-up. Nason (1980) notes, "(c)onversations on the telephone can be much more revealing. People will say more than they will write. They respond to specific questions. Their inflections of voice and hesitations in expressing their views can be more revealing than their actual words" (p. 46). Nason continues that, to avoid problems, who will make the calls and how the information will be shared should be planned in advance. If more than one PSC member is to call, "a general framework is desirable in order to get comparable judgments" (p. 46).

Selection of a New President. The PSC should report the top 3 to 5 choices, unranked, to the board. In this phase, the board has the responsibility to select the candidate to make an offer to as president. Given the decision to be made by both parties, this phase demands an increase in personal consideration of each candidate by the board to avoid discouraging the candidate.

Personal and discreet inquiries of associates should be made to gain more objective information. Some or all of the board members may request an on-site visit to the candidate's current institution and may request a final interview with the candidate and spouse as the last opportunity for information sharing by all parties. The interview process mentioned in the previous

phase applies here as well.

The on-site visit may reveal issues, personality traits, strengths or weaknesses, reputation, and relationships with present institutional individuals or groups which will need to be explored. The final interview with the candidate should be used to clarify expected relationships, problems, priorities, and financial situations as a full exchange of information. The presidential candidate should be permitted to review the minutes of board meetings and faculty meetings, personnel policies, student newspapers, campus newsletters, financial reports and budgets, and any additional pertinent information.

Additionally, the spouse should be made aware of his or her expected duties, if any. The board must consider the fact that more and more spouses are professionals who seek to continue their careers. The spouse's role in the presidency should not be taken for granted. Also, both the candidate and the spouse will be concerned about residency provisions and child-care reimbursement for small children, if necessary.

Finally, Kauffman (1974) points out the fact "...that presidents are assuming office earlier and must consider post-presidential careers while undergoing the rigors of the presidency" (p. 17). It behooves governing boards to take such facts into account in considering, appointing, and nurturing the new president.

Making the Offer and Negotiation. To avoid embarrassment, Kauffman (1974) suggests that the board should make the "Harvard Offer" to the top choice. That is, "If, on the basis of our negotiated understandings, you are invited to be our president, will you accept?" (p. 51). Obviously, a great deal of time and effort can be saved if the answer is "No," indicating the selected individual has decided against the presidency at the institution.

Whether or not such an approach is taken, however, the board should know what it intends to offer and what its expectations are of the new president and his or her spouse: The salary, term of appointment (although the president serves "at the pleasure of the board"), fringe benefit package including residency provisions, retirement plan, duties of the spouse, relationship with the board, expected criteria for evaluation, and any professional development program, for example. Additionally, the American Association of State Colleges and Universities (1975) and Kauffman (1974) encourage that, subsequent to negotiation and mutual acceptance, the terms of the appointment should be clearly stated in a formal contractual agreement. Beyond inclusion of the negotiated items listed directly above are the nature and scope of the authority and responsibility of the president, method for acquiring professorship or other administrative appointment, professional options at the time of official retirement (e.g., emeritus status, office space and resource use, or rights as a faculty member), moving allowance reimbursement, and the starting date.

The basic search framework, including the communication network as outlined above, can be adapted to suit the particular institutional resources and needs. Various concerns at each phase have been discussed. As a summary of some of the heretical procedures, Pattillo (1973) listed ten guidelines for governing boards to consider in the selection of a college president:

-Place primary responsibility for the search in a small committee of dedicated trustees...

-Request the advice of (administrators), faculty, students, and alumni representatives...

-Begin by reaching an understanding on the three or four qualifications that are essential for successful leadership of the institution at this stage in its history...

-Seek a (person) of ideas, not a bureaucrat...

-Compile a selective list of nominees from knowledgeable sources...

-Follow an orderly procedure in assessing candidates...

-Inform the constituency--alumni, (administrators), faculty, and students--of the procedure being followed and, in general, of the progress being made...

-Give candidate an accurate view of the institution--its assets, problems, and aspirations...

-Send a subcommittee of the board to visit the chosen candidate and extend a personal invitation to him to accept the presidency...

-Remember that you are asking the new president to take a very demanding position, one of the most demanding in American life....(p. 12)

Using Outside Consultants

The in-house procedures indicate that there is a growing openness of selection procedures and greater participation by interested parties. However, many members of a search committee have never been involved with a presidential search before and lack the experience and confidence. Therefore, many committees and boards do and should seek outside expert assistance in this complex problem. The decision to employ outside consultants should be given very serious consideration as part of the board's policy formulation on the search process, or at least as early as possible in the search process itself. Important areas to be discussed in making this decision include:

1. A careful checklist of advantages and disadvantages of using help, and

2. A determination of how many consultants are needed and the extent of their involvement.

Advantages and Disadvantages. Nason's survey (1980) examines the reasons for the rejection of outside professional expertise by many institutions. His findings include the concern of faculty and trustees of the outside consultant's ability to understand the institution's needs. There is the risk of offending constituencies. Also, outside consultants may be expensive.

Nason's survey additionally identified that 27% of the community colleges and 43% of private junior colleges reported employing outside help, well above the rates of public and private 4-year colleges and universities (10% and 24%, respectively) (p. 21). Since presidential turnover is high among community colleges and there is a stronger need for coordination of broad constituency participation, such findings appear consistent. A consulting individual or firm with an in-depth knowledge of community colleges and post-secondary education can be of great value in developing a pool of candidates, meeting equal opportunity/affirmative action requirements, increasing the assurance of confidentiality, contributing through personal contacts in background checks, and finding the appropriate candidate-institution fit. If this additional help increases the probability of finding the best person to fill the vacancy, it appropriately may justify any additional expenditure. Professional consultants, if carefully selected, will possess the expertise to find and to recruit the individuals to meet the needs of the institution.

Washtenaw Community College (MI, 1974) discussed possible options it might follow in selecting a new president. In one section they examined the advantages and disadvantages of using a consultant:

Advantages

A. More necessary if national search approach is used.

B. Right person(s) would allow most meaningful contacts with top placement agencies and outstanding community college leaders throughout the country.

C. Would expedite the process of application and screening.

D. Would quiet possible adversary relationships between groups interested in pushing a "special interest candidate."

Disadvantages

A. Probably would not allow the Board to pre-screen each of the 150-200 applicants.

B. The Board would not be totally immersed in each of the day-to-day, step-by-step activities of selection.

C. Would require some additional expenditure of funds. (p. 2)

Weights should be assigned to these advantages and disadvantages to determine if the outside consultant option is feasible, and then be compared with the other options, such as internal coordination of the search, to determine the desirable alternative.

Type of consultant/Level of involvement. The involvement of the outside consultant in the search can vary from simply making suggestions to the search committee to performing the complete search process (up to the final decision by the board). The number of consultants can be one or two individuals who have experience in the presidential search process of educational institutions or executive search services designed similarly to those for use by

corporations. Figure 4 highlights the principal dimensions in deciding to hi an outside consultant.

1. Type of Consultant	2. Level of Involvement: Record-keeping function only	2. Level of Involvement: Entire Search
Single individual	Lower cost; no scope beyond primary function; PSC more involved with many decision-making responsibilities	
Consulting firm		Higher cost; broader scope; PSC minimally involved with only cri tical decision-making responsibilities

Figure 4. Decision Matrix for Use of Consultants

Dimension 1: Type of Consultant. As previously mentioned the best outside help should come from consultants who are recognized both as experts the field of executive search and for their knowledge of the concept of the community college. Kronovet and Hawley (1977) note that the consultant to select "...should be widely recognized on the basis of his/her knowledge, experience and effectiveness with college and university management, as well scholarly contributions to higher education, other academic disciplines or research" (p. 3). The trustees will have to evaluate the credentials (along with other criteria) and determine with whom they would feel most comfortable

Individual consultants are "...usually ex-administrators or faculty whose specialty is in educational administration" (Nason, 1980, p. 21). At t other end of the continuum are consulting firms, which are usually staffed by the same types of individuals and are organized to provide a broader base of expertise. The Association of Community College Trustees (ACCT) has develope its Chief Executive Search Service in response to the needs of governing boar to conduct an efficient and effective search process. ACCT promotes its ser- vice by stating that its strengths include "...the best communications networ in the United States and Canada that can be utilized to verify candidates' qualifications. There is not a college president nor a chairman of the board that we cannot call on a confidential basis" (ACCT, undated b, p. 1). The service provides three professional regional teams of two members each, one a trustee and one a professional educator, which is an innovative idea, with st assistance for application processing and correspondence.

Professional Personnel Leasing, Inc., based in California, is another consulting firm which, among other services, can assist in a presidential search. A three-member team conducts a national recruiting effort, screens candidates to about 20 semi-finalists who are considered jointly by an in-hou search advisory committee, and provides an unranked list of three to five candidates for final selection by the board. The firm also assists in contra

negotiations for the successful candidate (Dunn, 1981).

Dimension 2: Level of Involvement. The governing board must not be misled into believing that outside consultants will provide all of the answers or make all of the decisions during the search. On the contrary, consultants cannot perform the key decision-making function of the governing board or replace the participation of the key constituencies of the institution. However, consultants' roles may range from an advisory function to that of decision maker (except for the final selection by the board), or from performing routine administrative duties at any or all steps in the process to assisting the PSC in performing the entire search process, again leaving the final decision to the board. At any level professional guidance can prove invaluable to an inexperienced board.

Kauffman (1980) lists a number of ways that consultants and consulting firms can help. First, someone has to be assigned to deal with nominees and candidates in a professional and objective way. In most cases, an outsider will be able to perform this function. Second, if an institution's image is suffering, it may be difficult to recruit the more desirable individuals. An experienced outside consultant should be able to interpret the situation and be seen as a neutral and open party in contacting nominees.

Finally, given the close proximity to the situation, often it is very difficult for boards and constituencies to formulate a description of the current position, the future direction, and the needs of the institution, and develop realistic qualifications based on a truthful self-appraisal. Outside experts can help in the process by raising difficult questions and critical issues and by providing guidance in discussions and formal write-ups of institutional analysis and needs. The ACCT has recently organized its Board Retreat Service, designed to help boards "...to discuss ways of moving to solutions, bringing the board closer together, helping to create a more positive climate of understanding and cooperation and of improving board/administration relations, board/faculty relations and administration/faculty relations" (undated a, p. 1). Initiated prior to the start of the executive search process, ACCT consultants (who would continue in the search process) meet with the board and perhaps other institutional segments. Through the use of expert guidance, the most favorable atmosphere possible would be established prior to the beginning of the search and maintained to help the new president get off to the best start.

Most consultants who also carry out the bulk of the search follow a framework closely resembling the search process described in the first section. The PSC usually is formed to provide input into decisions and actions taken by the consultants at each phase. As an example, the ACCT (undated b) outlines that its Professional Search Team's procedures include meeting with the governing board and advisory committee to determine candidate qualification criteria and constituencies to be involved in the search, screening all applications (which are kept confidential) down to approximately 10 to 15 to be categorized into three groups, and conducting an additional confidential investigation of the three to five finalists. At the end of the selection process, all records are turned over to the board for disposal according to board policy.

As examples of consultant use, Joliet Junior College (IL, 1978) and

Metropolitan Technical Community College (NE, 1979) developed plans and procedures for selection of a president which involved use of outside experts. At Joliet Junior College the consultant was responsible for performing a national search and screening candidates down to between 10 and 20 individuals. A screening committee composed of constituents then assisted the consultant to reduce the number to 8 to 10 candidates. Interviews were scheduled to determine an unranked group containing the top 4 or 5 candidates for Board review and selection. One administrator was appointed to coordinate the process and provide proper communication.

Metropolitan Technical College had a similar approach which charged a Resource Search Assistant (outside consultant) to conduct a national search, review all applications, and then screen to 30 candidates. Also, the assistant checked references and experiences of those candidates selected for review by the Presidential Screening Committee. Metropolitan Technical College was one of the first colleges to obtain the Resource Search Assistant by use of the Chief Executive Search Service offered by the Association of Community College Trustees.

Special Problems and Issues

Careful planning is essential to perform an efficient and effective search for a new president. The dynamics of presidential selection will or should be altered by a number of current conditions with which many community college boards are faced. Each board must examine explicitly the implications of these conditions for the future of the institution and tailor the search process as is necessary. These conditions include multicampus districts, Affirmative Action, and the fiscal/enrollment crisis.

Multicampus districts. Many colleges are a part of multicampus districts with centralized district governing boards. These boards are spending greater amounts of time searching for new campus presidents, given the increased number of campuses under their control. Carpenter (1979) noted that in Utah, from 1969 to September 1979, 10 searches were undertaken affecting all but one institution. He also noted that each institution was different, requiring special tailoring of the search process to each situation.

There is a need for delineation of a carefully planned, yet flexible, search and selection process. District boards ideally should remain in control of the search while ensuring broad and meaningful representation of the constituencies from the institution, the community, and the state to establish a broad base of support for the selected individual. Kauffman (1974) suggests a "Rainbow Committee" composed of 3 campus representatives, 2 district trustees, a staff person, the district chancellor, and 2 individuals from another campus, including its president. The process is decentralized to allow the committee to define the position, perform the search, and recommend about 5 names to the district board. Another approach is to have the chancellor appoint an advisory chairman and committee, the majority of members who are faculty, students, and staff, to make recommendations to the chancellor for selection.

However, the current situation is far from ideal. It is becoming more and more difficult for system governing boards to be cognizant of campus

acivities or the feelings of students and faculty, due to the growing tendency toward centralization of authority and decision making. Kauffman (1978) points out, "(s)election of their campus chief executive officers is often a tug-of-war between campus interests and central administration or system interests. Campus heads, in systems, are often caught in the middle--living with governance arrangements that are often rigid and legalistic; responding to the leadership and advocacy expectations of their campus faculty, students, and alumni; and often being treated as middle-management or field representatives by a system board or system administration" (p. 2). The role of campus president is relatively new; there is little tradition to guide expectations and relationships in the position. It is difficult to derive a list of the desired qualifications to be used as a guide during the search. The probability of finding the most qualified person to fill the vacancy with clear communication of expectations is lowered. Kauffman (1980) believes that this has resulted in a higher turnover rate for this group than for non-district campus presidents. Many district campus heads have complained about their lack of satisfaction with their positions, especially with the lower degree of authority than expected.

To "add fuel to the fire," collective bargaining is more likely to exist at a campus which is part of a system where campus faculty and staff feel the need to use this vehicle to increase their influence in campus decisions. District boards will have to evaluate this concern and carefully define the role and desired qualifications of the new president to include skills at or prior experience with collective bargaining situations.

Affirmative Action. The extent of the search depends on the circumstances. The board may decide on an internal, local, or major national search. Unless the appointment is to be made internally, the search must be open and in line with certain legal requirements. As indicated in the first section, current state and federal legal requirements mandate that an honest effort be undertaken to make the vacancy known to and include women and minority groups in the applicant pool. Executive Order 11246, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and elsewhere set forth the requirements aimed at eliminating discrimination in hiring, promoting, and compensating employees on the basis of sex, race, age, and ethnic background (Nason, 1980). Therefore, it is inadvisable to restrict an external search to only a few sources. Not only might a limited search violate the law, but it may also offend the constituencies.

The legislation emphasizes that an institution should be able to provide evidence that its recruitment procedures allow for an open and meaningful search, one where there are attempts to solicit all appropriately qualified individuals. Nason (1980) includes a memo from the Vice President and General Counsel of Bucknell University which highlights the legal requirements. The summary follows:

1. The job description may not be discriminatory as to age, race, religion, national origin, or sex.

2. Any "affirmative advertising" must indicate that the institution is an equal opportunity and affirmative action employer.

3. A good faith effort to perform an open search can be satisfied by advertising in publications with general circulation such as the New York Times, The Chronicle of Higher Education, and in publications which might bring the vacancy to the attention of women and minority groups. Records of all notices should be maintained.

4. No inquiry should be made about marital status.

5. Records should be maintained of the race, sex, and ethnic origin of the applicant, as well as the disposition of applications and justification for the final selection, to be included in a report on the search.

6. No reference to age should be made in the report.

7. A written job description including anticipated responsibilities and qualifications should be prepared, paying particular notice that educational qualification, experience, or other skills do not in themselves constitute discrimination.

8. Before candidates are interviewed and an offer is made, the institution's committee or office on equal employment opportunity must approve the job description and recruiting plan. (p. 40)

Kaplowitz (1973) emphasizes that "the vacancy must be adequately posted; the screening procedures must be objective; and job offers must reflect equitable compensation considerations" (p. 7).

Fiscal/Enrollment Crisis. Much has been written about the present status and future direction of community colleges. While the relevant studies will not be discussed here, the general trends will be summarized to highlight their relevance to the presidential search process.

In the critical early phases of the executive search process, governing boards must perform a careful institutional analysis to identify current strengths and weaknesses, must enumerate institutional goals and the present and future needs of the institution to attain goals and objectives, and must detail desired qualifications for new institutional leadership towards the goals and objectives. Part of the institutional analysis should include a consideration of present and future environmental constraints. Some community colleges will be affected more negatively than others by these constraints; some will have more difficulty attracting the best pool of qualified candidates and nominees. Both the search process and evaluative criteria should be tailored in line with each institution's environmental context.

Consideration should be given to many conditions. There has been and will be changes in the demographics and needs of the student population. Overall, there has been a decrease in the rate of enrollment growth figures, with some colleges experiencing growth and others decline. There has been however an increase in the demand for career preparation, in the number and retraining of older students, and in the cultural diversity of students, leading to curricular changes as well as shifts in institutional mission, role, and scope. Weekend college programs, for example, are springing up as a

response to demand shifts and, in many cases, as an act of survivalism (Cosand, 1975 and Kauffman, 1980).

General attitudes also have changed. There has been a reduced sense of value or priority for support of higher education. Students are exhibiting "stop in" and "stop out" behavior. There is a growing sense of the importance of cooperation to reduce wasteful duplication of effort among and within institutions. Some efforts have been voluntary; others are promoted by district or statewide coordinating boards.

In addition, community colleges are experiencing financial difficulties, many times due to national and local economic conditions, but compounded by the other constraints previously discussed. Further, as Kauffman (1980) notes, "often, those most beset by declining enrollment and, thus, financial problems are the first to unionize" (p. 82).

The future success of an institution will be in part a function of how well the governing board analyzes these conditions' implications and effectively searches for the most qualified leader. The criteria for selection may include, among many others, experience in fiscal crisis management, collective bargaining, and public and political relations.

INTERIM OR ACTING PRESIDENTS IN EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The optimal situation leading to a presidential search appears to be under conditions of normal retirement, or, on occasion, planned resignation, where a 6 to 12-month lead time is available to perform a careful search for new leadership. Unfortunately, only approximately one-third of the presidential vacancies provide for such ample notice. The other two-thirds happen suddenly, creating transitional disruption (Nason, 1979).

Unanticipated resignations occur for various personal or institutional reasons. Occasionally, vacancies arise from unexpected deaths. It is also possible that a board may believe that the president is not carrying out the board's policies and cannot do so. Immediate termination may be the proper result. How will the institution be lead until a new appointment is made given that a careful search is to be performed?

In any case, the governing board must respond in the face of the crisis. If procedures have not been established in advance as a precautionary measure, the functioning of the institution literally could come to a halt. The constituencies' anxiety levels could rise quickly. The governing board may make dysfunctional decisions without careful thought as it seeks to remedy a very tense condition. These possibilities highlight the propriety of, not only establishing policies for the presidential search and selection process, but planning how to bridge these transitional disruptions through interim administration. The critical initial board reaction guided by established policies should enhance setting of the proper atmosphere for a more effective and efficient search for president.

This section will be organized in a fashion similar to the first. Phase 1 in the presidential search process (Appointment of an Acting or Interim President) from Figure 2, including the role, advantages and disadvantages of

interim or acting presidents will be discussed first. Then the use of consultants in this process will be examined, followed by a discussion of special problems and issues that should be considered.

In-House Appointment

When an anticipated or unanticipated presidential vacancy becomes known, the governing board should announce plans for interim administration (if necessary) and the search process for a successor (Kauffman, 1974). Quick action on interim needs that have been carefully planned is advantageous, but there can also be problems. The costs and benefits of using acting or interim presidents will be summarized. In general, however, the positive benefits of providing for transitional administration appear to outweigh the costs.

Advantages/Disadvantages. Acting or interim positions are often thought of as maintenance positions. That is, the result of such an appointment is a "holding operation" where major changes in policies and programs are for the most part postponed (Nason, 1980). Nason (1980) writes that "(t)rustees, faculty, students who have lived through such periods know how frustrating they can be" (p. 14). The term used to capture the essence of the experience is a period of "indecisive leadership." No doubt this maintenance position can be difficult for all parties involved. However, the governing board should consider the advantages of temporary leadership.

Nason (1980) quotes from Frederic W. Ness, "'...many colleges and universities, when confronted with a presidential change, are not ready for a new leadership and...by a premature selection they do the institution a disservice that can seriously affect its future'" (p. 14). Ness sees two advantages to employing interim presidents: First, time for an effective search is obtained, and second, the interim president can provide valuable insight into the position and be a major source of information for candidates as assistance in the search. Another positive effect is that governing boards who support and trust the appointed individual can concentrate on searching for a "permanent" leader without being distracted with daily institutional management. It appears that a well-defined role and expectations set for the interim or acting president can enhance his or her effectiveness and the transition. These issues are examined next.

Initiation of plans for interim administration. Assuming that the situation calls for interim administration, the governing board will appoint someone to the temporary position, but this action requires a series of decisions which should be made in advance. First, the inside versus outside appointment issue should be addressed. As with the selection of an insider for the "permanent" presidency, inside applicants have some liabilities. Their weaknesses are usually known and tend to negatively bias the perceived strengths. They are also one of the constituencies in the institution which may be supporting a favorite candidate in the "permanent" search process. Dick (1977) relates that historically "...it is a trusted senior member of the administration who is not considered a candidate for the position. In some cases persons have been made acting presidents in order to try them out for the position" (p. 10).

Related to the insider/outsider issue, almost every critic who discusses interim appointment applicants emphasizes the fact that whoever is chosen

should not be a candidate for the "permanent" presidency. Some internal appointees, who agreed not to seek the "permanent" presidency, change their minds and later want to be president. There even may be constituency support. The ACCT (undated c), for example, outlines in a concise fashion the serious problems that could result by appointing an individual who is also a candidate for the permanent position:

> If you appoint an acting president from the staff who is going to be a candidate then we see some potential pitfalls:
>
> 1) If this person does not get the job, then the new president comes on board faced with one of his/her competitors who is still on the staff.
>
> 2) The acting president will probably not do anything more than keep the college on a steady course. The acting president will be reluctant to make any needed changes for fear of "rocking the boat" or failing in an endeavor that would jeapordize his/her chances of getting the job.
>
> 3) If the person does not get the job after already occupying the office (both physically and psychologically) then a certain "loss of face" could occur that might be greater than otherwise would have been the case.
>
> 4) This situation puts greater psychological and political pressure on the board to give that person the job because the board has already shown a degree of confidence in that person by appointing him/her in the acting position. (p. 1)

The board must not equivocate; the interim president must not be a candidate. A written statement of intention at the time of appointment of the interim president will clarify the expectations of the appointee from the beginning. The board can enforce its policy with a written statement.

Another issue receiving recent attention is the title and authority to be given to the temporary leader--Acting or Interim President. It appears that the semantic difference has a great deal to do with the role and expectations of the position as perceived by the appointee as well as interested constituencies. "Acting" connotes authority of the president at a more superficial level than "Interim," which is performing as the president, not like the president. Some writings on the thoughts of the interim presidency indicate that "(i)n the acting presidency, there appears to always be some doubts as to weight of the office in terms of its authority to act decisively on matters of importance" (Barringer, 1980, p. 1).

De Zonia (1979) warns that, since the temporary president serves at the pleasure of the board, the governing board may increase its problems by expressing a role and expectations that are too restrictive.

> The board can shackle the Acting, making him or her dependent on the board or its staff (in the instance of systems). The board thus inevitably gets itself ensnarled in the daily management of the institution. (p. 33)

Most community colleges need firm leadership during the transition period. De Zonia (1979) continues:

> ...(A)n effective Acting not only prevents the feared chaos but contributes to the ongoing momentum of the institution by acting as president (p. 33).

The governing board should vest full authority in the appointed person to act as president to "...minimize the risk of compromising its own leadership role and that of its temporary chief executive" (De Zonia, 1979, p. 33). The most recent preference appears to be a title of "Interim" with full authority to act as president.

In the appointment process, which is performed similarly to a "mini"-search, it is important to focus on what the expectations of the interim presidency are. First, the position requires the appointed individual to act as the chief executive officer. Thus, the board must be willing to support the person filling this role. It is also recognized that the position can greatly facilitate the "permanent" search process, since the interim president should serve as an in-house consultant (Barringer, 1980).

To select an interim president from a small pool of applicants and nominees, many of the characteristics and skills needed to serve as an effective "permanent" president are used as qualifications for the interim position. Some of these as listed by Barringer (1980) are:

> --intelligence and the ability to quickly understand the issues and problems facing the institution,
>
> --ability to employ time effectively,
>
> --capacity for, and an enjoyment of a heavy work-load,
>
> --facility for conflict resolution,
>
> --capacity to facilitate communications among various college constituencies,
>
> --personal and professional integrity,
>
> --capacity to understand that process is about as important as product,
>
> --firmness, assertiveness, yet humaneness,
>
> --ability to define priorities and work toward addressing the most crucial ones. (p. 1)

In the "mini"-search, the candidate should have the opportunity to speak with campus groups and study the college and situation. Not only must the board be unequivocally supportive, but it would be wise to have some consensus from campus constituencies as to the best candidate based on his or her ability to perform the agreed-upon tasks to be accomplished during the interim period (Barringer, 1980). The appointed person should receive an explicit statement or list of expectations and role to perform most effectively.

The efficient "mini"-search process should be clearly defined so as to provide rapidly for interim administration. Since the "permanent" presidential search will require three to twelve months, the interim's appointment should be so specified. By a careful selection of the best qualified person for the interim presidency, the board will allow for a smoother transition.

To conclude on the key issues of the Acting or Interim presidency, De Zonia (1979) summarized concerns as follows:

1. Acting leadership must be exercised to be effective.

2. Governing boards would do well to charge the temporary chief to act "as" president.

3. The board should consider the desirability of appointing a non-candidate for the presidency as Acting.

4. Institutional support staff (and others) must rally around the Acting.

5. The Acting's role with faculty, alumni, students, etc., must be an active and communicative one.

6. The transitional period following selection of a new president imposes heavy obligations on both the Acting and the new person (pp. 34-35).

Using Outside Consultants

One option available to community college governing boards in appointing an interim president is to seek outside assistance from professional consultants. Most consultants would advise that a well-qualified and willing individual who is within the present administration may be the best candidate for the interim appointment. The advantages to the governing board and institution include providing a quicker response to the transition crisis by employing someone who already understands the situation and institution (although his or her perspective may have to be altered). However, this is generally true when the appointee also is not a candidate for the "permanent" presidency.

If no other internal applicant is sufficient, the only choice is to look outside of the institution for temporary leadership. This search can be overly time-consuming. Outside consultants with expertise in this area can provide an invaluable service to find in a relatively short period of time an experienced person who fits the bill. As noted in the first section, the type of consultants and level of their involvement in the appointment process can vary, each combination having certain advantages as well as disadvantages that must be weighed by the board in its decision process. Examples of outside consulting services available include the ACCT and Professional Personnel Leasing, Inc.

Besides its Chief Executive Search Service, the ACCT has organized an Interim President Service during 1980. For boards who decide to pursue the

service, the ACCT will analyze the institution's situation and forward resumes of three to five willing and experienced individuals who are believed to possess the skills necessary for the job. The board of trustees must then interview the individuals and select an interim president, who is not to be considered for the "permanent" position.

The ACCT has outlined formal contract provisions as a way of making explicit to all parties the role and expectations for the interim president. The general expectations include two areas:

1. The Interim President will act as president in the fullest extent of the position, and

2. The Interim President will work with the Board to make recommendations and implement changes in staffing budgetary matters, community and other constituency relations, board policies, and any other management decisions that should not be postponed for a "permanent" president. (Adapted from ACCT, undated c, p. 2).

Negotiated items include housing, and fringe benefits, as well as any special projects (e.g., long-range planning or administrative management study and evaluation of board policies) that the board feels is needed. The minimum contract time is 3 months. In many cases, the Interim President will expect and/or should receive a salary above what is expected to be offered to the new "permanent" president, given the tenuous position undertaken.

Professional Personnel Leasing, Inc. (Dunn, 1981) also can provide interim presidents from their pool of experienced administrators. For institutions who seek an outsider to lead the college in the interim, the trend toward use of professional consultants is a logical and positive step in the evolution of effective and efficient search procedures.

Special problems and issues

A number of issues have been discussed in this section. Also, a number of those examined in the first section under "Special Problems and Issues" are equally applicable here. However, there are two additional concerns surrounding the interim presidency that should affect if, what type of, and for what purposes an interim leader is appointed.

Predecessor problems. The candidate for the interim presidency must perform a study of the institutional situation to see if he or she is interested in pursuing the temporary position. An insider usually has the distinct advantage of being familiar with the current, historical, and future direction of the institution, and there is very little start-up time lost to learning about the situation at hand (Evans and Fletcher, 1980). Governing boards should be cautious, however, because for more effective leadership (beyond maintenance of operations), "(t)he interim president must bring an objectivity to the position" (Barringer, 1980, p. 2). Barringer continues, "(h)e/she can take the necessary actions, however unpopular, that often need to be taken, and can do so with little timidity, but of course with the greatest sensitivity and understanding of the situation" (p. 2). The necessary actions

can include the firing of staff (e.g., vice-presidents, deans) and strict financial-management measures (e.g., hiring freezes, budget reductions). Internal appointees may not be sufficiently objective to make many difficult and oftentimes necessary decisions, assuming that the insider is not also a candidate for the "permanent" position which further confounds the objectivity requirement.

The problems, both in number and severity, caused or left remaining by the predecessor president will dictate the need for and type of interim leadership that each institution will require. It appears that the more critical the situation, the more important it is to appoint someone from outside the institution who has broad experience in the chief leadership of community colleges, and the more necessary it may be to seek outside consultants to find the most qualified person for that position.

Successor problems. The turnover in the presidency affords the institution with the opportunity for renewal, reevaluation, and consensual commitment to the future of the community college. How a governing board responds to the awareness of a presidential vacancy (how well planned, organized, and communicated) can have a significant impact on the atmosphere created by the transitional disruption--chaotic versus organized, negative versus positive, dysfunctional versus collegial. Also, the most favorable atmosphere possible should be created to increase the probability of attraction of the best candidates and success of the new president. Barringer (1980) states that the interim president "...can act as a breakwater between any turbulence which might have been the consequence of the previous administrative difficulties and the future permanent administration" (p. 2). Again, in those cases where interim administration may be under consideration, a well-planned and timely response by the board for strong interim leadership may promote the positive atmosphere that is desired.

An important, although sometimes not emphasized, function of an interim president is to encourage a smooth transition to the new president as a continuation of a positive institutional climate. In most cases, when a candidate is finally chosen for the presidential vacancy, there will be a three to six-month time lag between the appointment and the installation. This appears to be a time for necessary communication of institutional activities to the new president where an interim president should be a valuable link in these communications.

A number of authors have noted the problems that can occur when an internally appointed interim president is interacting with the new "permanent" president during and after the transition. It is difficult for some individuals to adjust from acting as president to returning to a prior position (e.g., vice-president or dean) (Evans and Fletcher, 1980). Sometimes the tendency is to want to stay involved in the presidential functioning, which can have a severe negative impact on the relationship between the ex-interim president and the new "permanent" president. It is also possible for the interim president to disapprove of the new appointee. This raises the possibility of an inaccurate or insufficient information flow to the "permanent" president during and subsequent to the transition.

These concerns are related to the objectivity criterion mentioned above. Therefore, it appears logical to suggest that appointing a qualified outsider

as interim president will better ensure for a proper, more open communication exchange.

HERETICAL CONCEPTS AND CONCLUSIONS FOR PRESIDENTIAL SEARCH

Executive talent, particularly at the presidential level, is a major investment by community colleges. Therefore it is critical that the institutions seek out the best person to be president through a thorough and efficient search process. Kauffman (1974) states that "the potential effectiveness of a college or university president is, at least in part, a function of the process by which he or she is selected. If that process involves the appropriate constituencies of the institution, clarifies goals, objectives and priorities, and enables the board to select a person it can support fully, then a foundation for success will have been established" (p. 3). The current direction of college searches and interim administrations is positive. Although there is a wide spectrum of institutional plans for executive search, the use of the general framework for current search procedures is a sound approach as it has evolved out of concern by interested parties to find the right person for the job in an efficient and effective manner.

This paper is prescriptive in nature. It must be emphasized once more however that "...(t)here is no single and ideal search and selection process .... Second, there is no such thing as the ideal college or university president" (Nason, 1979, pp. 19-20). Following a framework similar to the one in Figure 2 and placing particular attention to special problems and issues in responding to presidential transition should greatly facilitate development of plans by the governing board for an effective and efficient, yet tailored, search process.

Pattillo's (1973) guidelines to assist governing boards in conducting a search (as previously listed) are useful. There are, however, additional heretical concepts that need to be emphasized that are relevant to improvement of the current executive search process. Some of the heretical procedures, things that are not normally done that should be, have been discussed in this paper.

1. Consider the use of outside consultants, not only for the "permanent" presidential search, but also to find the best person for temporary interim administration. Some organizations are developing or have developed new services to respond to an apparent demand in the growing trend of employing acting or interim presidents.

2. Warn the internal appointee for the interim presidency that the appointment may be detrimental to his or her future. A "Catch 22" situation surrounds internal applicants for interim positions. On one hand, the board does not expect the appointee to be a candidate for the "permanent" presidency. However, the current tendency is for boards to evaluate candidates who were or are interim presidents elsewhere from a different perspective. Why didn't the candidate become president at his or her own institution? The evolution toward the use of non-candidate interim presidents has not progressed to the point of a clear understanding of the position. The

appointment is perceived as a weakness instead of a strength by some board members. Hopefully, this tenuous situation will change.

3. Perform an institutional analysis that will highlight, not only weaknesses, but strengths, to find the community college's competitive edge. The institution should have at least one uniquely positive feature that will attract candidates. The analysis is used as a critical step in determining the requisities for the new president and to provide for a focus for future decisions made by the board. In performing the evaluation to update the institution's mission, role, and scope, establishing, if necessary, and promoting the unique characteristics will help to draw the qualified candidates in the search.

4. Employ innovative, yet legal and ethical, recruitment techniques. Many searches are reopened when it is recognized that the candidate pool is not strong. This problem may be averted if recruiting goes beyond the normal means. One method, for example, is to contact presidents who are known to have good personnel development practices and who would be willing to provide names of employees who might be qualified candidates. The solid candidates also are identified earlier in the process.

5. Communicate early the powers, duties, and authority of the presidency to the candidates. Too often this important dimension of the presidency is not discussed until late in the search process, if at all. The board should explicitly determine the job expectations as an extention of the institutional analysis. The board members should analyze the kind of relationship that they want to have with the new president. It has been mentioned as a special problem that campus presidential searches performed by multicampus district governing boards have much difficulty in determining expectations and relationships.

6. Employ innovative contractual arrangements. There are many alternatives to salary offers alone that could entice the selected candidate to become the new president. Many packages can be devised that include nontaxable benefits. Besides salary, there are presidential residency, club memberships, pension or retirement plans, and retirement provisions with emeritus or faculty status and related privileges, and additional perquisites. Creativity in this era of tighter resources may add to the community college's competitive edge.

The leadership role of presidents of community colleges is increasing in importance to ensure the continued viability of the institutions faced with demands from an increasingly complex society, including the institutions faced with fiscal stringency. Planning, along with an ongoing evaluation of the president, the institution's objectives, and the institution's state, should improve the quality of the decisions made by the governing board, especially one of its most important decisions--selection of a new president to provide for the required leadership of the institution.

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